

POTATO CULTIVAR FL1879

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Al* BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a novel potato variety and to the tubers, plants, plant parts, tissue culture and seeds produced by that potato variety.

5 The publications and other materials used herein to illuminate the background of the invention and, in particular cases, to provide additional details respecting the practice, are incorporated by reference and for convenience, are referenced in the following text by author and date and are listed alphabetically by author in the appended bibliography.

10 The potato is the world's fourth most important food crop and by far the most important vegetable. Potatoes are currently grown commercially in nearly every state of the United States. Annual potato production exceeds 18 million tons in the United States and 300 million tons worldwide. The popularity of the potato derives mainly from its versatility and nutritional value. Potatoes can be  
15 used fresh, frozen or dried, or can be processed into flour, starch or alcohol. They contain complex carbohydrates and are rich in calcium, niacin and vitamin C.

To keep the potato industry growing to meet the needs of the consuming public, substantial research and development efforts are devoted to the  
20 modernization of planting and harvesting of fields and processing of potatoes, and to the development of economically advantageous potato varieties. Through

crossbreeding of potatoes, researchers hope to obtain potatoes with the desirable characteristics of good processability, high solids content, high yield, resistance to diseases and pests and adaptability to various growing areas and conditions.

- 5       The U.S. acreage planted in potatoes has declined since the 1960s and 1970s, and this decline, coupled with increasing consumption, must be offset by higher useable yields. In some areas, diseases and pests damage crops despite the use of herbicides and pesticides. The problem of the golden nematode in the United States, presently endemic to portions of New York State, is one
- 10       example of the destruction to susceptible potato varieties. Potato varieties with high yields, disease resistance and adaptability to new environments can eliminate many problems for the potato grower and provide more plentiful and economical products to the consumers.

- For the potato chip processing industry, potatoes having high solids
- 15       content, good shipping qualities and good finished chip color can increase production volumes and efficiencies and product acceptability. Potato varieties which yield low-solids tubers result in unnecessary energy usage during the frying process. Moreover, as solids content increases, the oil content of fried products decreases, which is a favorable improvement. Potato varieties in the
- 20       warm southern tier of states are most in need of solids improvement overall, while those varieties grown and stored in the colder northern tier of states are most in need of the ability to recondition after cool or cold storage to increase their value for use in the potato chip industry. Reconditioning is necessary to elevate the temperature of the potatoes after cold storage and before further
- 25       processing.

The research leading to potato varieties which combine the advantageous characteristics referred to above is largely empirical. This research requires large investments of time, manpower, and money. The development of a potato cultivar can often take up to eight years or more from greenhouse to commercial

usage. Breeding begins with careful selection of superior parents to incorporate the most important characteristics into the progeny. Since all desired traits usually do not appear with just one cross, breeding must be cumulative.

Present breeding techniques continue with the controlled pollination of parental clones. Typically, pollen is collected in gelatin capsules for later use in pollinating the female parents. Hybrid seeds are sown in greenhouses, and tubers are harvested and retained from thousands of individual seedlings. The next year a single tuber from each resulting seedling is planted in the field, where extreme caution is exercised to avoid the spread of virus and diseases. From this first-year seedling crop, several "seed" tubers from each hybrid individual which survived the selection process are retained for the next year's planting. After the second year, samples are taken for density measurements and fry tests to determine the suitability of the tubers for commercial usage. Plants which have survived the selection process to this point are then planted at an expanded volume the third year for a more comprehensive series of fry tests and density determinations. At the fourth-year stage of development, surviving selections are subjected to field trials in several states to determine their adaptability to different growing conditions. Eventually, the varieties having superior qualities are transferred to other farms and the seed increased to commercial scale. Generally, by this time, eight or more years of planting, harvesting and testing have been invested in attempting to develop the new and improved potato cultivars.

Long-term, controlled-environment storage has been a feature of the northern, principal producing areas for many years. Potatoes harvested by October must be kept in good condition for up to eight months in temperatures that may drop to -30 degrees C. at times and with very low relative humidity in the outside air. Storages are well insulated, not only to prevent heat loss but also to prevent condensation on outside walls. The circulation of air at the required temperature and humidity is automatically controlled depending on the

purpose for which the potatoes are being stored. Sprout inhibition is now largely carried out in storage as it has been found to be more satisfactory than the application of maleic hydrazide (MH30) in the field.

5 Proper testing of new plants should detect any major faults and establish the level of superiority or improvement over current varieties. In addition to showing superior performance, a new variety must be compatible with industry standards or create a new market. The introduction of a new variety will increase costs of the tuber propagator, the grower, processor and consumer; for special advertising and marketing, altered tuber propagation and new product  
10 utilization. The testing preceding release of a new variety should take into consideration research and development costs as well as technical superiority of the final variety. Once the varieties that give the best performance have been identified, the tuber can be propagated indefinitely as long as the homogeneity of the variety parent is maintained. For tuber propagated varieties, it must be  
15 feasible to produce, store and process potatoes easily and economically.

Thus, there is a continuing need to develop potato cultivars which provide good processability out of storage, with minimal bruising, for manufacturers of potato chips and other potato products and to combine this characteristic with the properties of disease resistance, resistance to pests. The present invention  
20 addresses this need by providing the new variety as described herein.

#### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to the invention, there is provided a novel potato cultivar of the genus and species, *Solanum tuberosum*, designated FL1879. This invention thus relates to the tubers of potato variety FL1879, the plants and plant parts of  
25 potato variety FL1879 and to methods for producing a potato plant produced by crossing the potato variety FL1879 with itself or another potato variety. This invention further relates to hybrid potato seeds and plants produced by crossing the potato variety FL1879 with another potato plant.

In another aspect, the present invention provides for Single Gene Converted plants of FL1879. The single gene transferred may be a dominant or recessive allele. Preferably, the single gene transferred will confer such traits as herbicide resistance, insect resistance, resistance for bacterial, fungal or viral disease, uniformity and increase in concentration of starch and other carbohydrates, decrease in tendency of tuber to bruise and decrease in the rate of conversion of starch to sugars. The single gene transferred may be a naturally occurring gene or a transgene introduced through genetic engineering techniques.

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#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

A novel potato cultivar of the present invention, which has been designated FL1879, has been obtained by selectively crossbreeding parental clones through several generations. The immediate parents of FL1879 were cultivars designated FL1207 and Snowden. These parent strains were selected for the ability to be processed into light-colored potato chips when stored several months at cold temperatures and for their properties of a high number of tuber sets and good yield potential, as well as high content of dry matter.

FL1879 cultivar has olive green foliage. This cultivar has medium, but ultimately vigorous vine growth and few white flowers and produces tubers which are characterized by a pale yellow flesh color, a good specific gravity, moderately high dry matter content, and a substantially smooth, slightly oval shape. As a chipping variety to be grown principally for processing out of storage, the most appropriate variety with which to compare FL1879 is the commercial cultivar Snowden, which is one of the parental lines. A comparison of FL1879 with Snowden reveals that FL1879 has semi-erect growth habit and produces oval, pale yellow fleshed tubers while Snowden's growth habit is more erect, has less compact plants, and produces round, white fleshed tubers. While both FL1879 and Snowden have white flowers that are similar, flowering is much more frequent in Snowden.

FL 1879 has average yields slightly higher than Snowden and its solids are slightly lower. FL1879 is highly resistant to Tuber Early Blight, which is a significant benefit in the Southwest. The tubers produced by FL1879 are well-suited for the production of potato chips. A characteristic feature of the tubers is their comparatively good specific gravity relative to the standard commercial variety in a production area. The specific gravity generally ranges from about 1.070 to 1.079; however, it will be appreciated that specific gravities can vary substantially depending upon growing conditions and areas. Higher specific gravities are advantageous for chipping and other frying applications, as they reduce the total energy and time required for the frying operation.

In addition to the specific gravity of the tubers of this invention, they also have an advantageous shape for commercial operations. The tubers are smooth skinned and generally lack knobs and other protuberances, as well as deep ridges or convolutions. Accordingly, they are amenable to efficient washing and peeling operations using large-scale automated equipment. Such shapes produce a high quality product with a minimal amount of waste. The tubers are generally oval in shape and have a size which is suited to the manufacture of potato chips. On average, these tubers have a mean length of 80 millimeters (range: 62-105 millimeters); a mean width of 73 millimeters (range: 60-90 millimeters); and a mean thickness of 52 millimeters (range: 40-68 millimeters) based upon a 100-tuber sample. Of course, the size of the tubers can vary over a relatively wide range depending on growing conditions and locations. The slightly flattened shape of the tubers is advantageous, because it facilitates alignment in the slicing apparatus.

Among the more important characteristics of the potato cultivar of this invention is its resistance to tuber blemishes caused by early blight (*Alternaria solani*), which is a significant threat to production in the Southwest. Additionally, it has pale yellow flesh and produces attractive chips both fresh from the field and after storage from October through April. A comparison of the storage life of tubers from the parent cultivar, Snowden, and the cultivar of this invention

illustrates that the cultivar of the invention has a storage life which is approximately eight months longer than that of Snowden.

Other advantageous properties of the plants of the present invention include its potential as a storage chipping variety for the northern states of the United States, as well as areas of Texas and New Mexico that grow chipping potatoes for storage.

In addition to the morphological characteristics and disease and pest resistance as described above, the plants of this invention are characterized by their protein "fingerprint" patterns. The protein "fingerprint" is determined by separating tuber proteins on an electrophoretic gel under certain defined conditions. The pattern of the proteins, attributable to their differential mobilities on the electrophoretic gel, have been found to be characteristic of the particular plant involved. This pattern has thus been termed a "fingerprint." Isozyme fingerprints of all available North American potato varieties have revealed that no two varieties have the same pattern for the enzymes tested. (Douches and Ludlam, 1991). The isozyme fingerprint of FL1879 has been established as distinct from that of any other variety tested, including Snowden (Douches and Ludlam, 1991). These techniques generally involve extracting proteins from the tuber and separating them electrophoretically.

Potato variety FL1879 has the following morphologic and other characteristics.

#### VARIETY DESCRIPTION INFORMATION

1. **Classification:** *Solanum Tuberosum* L.
2. **Plant characteristics:** (Observed at beginning of bloom)
 

25	Growth habit:	Semi-erect (30°-45° with ground)
	Type:	Intermediate
	Maturity (Days after planting - DAP):	135
	Maturity Class:	Late (121-130 DAP)
3. **Stem Characteristics:** (Observed at early first bloom)
 

30	Stem (anthocyanin coloration):	Absent
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	<b>Stem (wings):</b>	<b>Medium</b>
4.	<b>Leaf Characteristics:</b> (Observed fully developed leaves located in the middle one-third of plant):	
	Leaf (color):	Olive green/137A RHS
5	Leaf (pubescence density):	Medium
	Leaf (silhouette):	Medium
	Petioles (anthocyanin coloration):	Absent
	Terminal leaflet (shape):	Medium ovate
	Terminal leaflet (shape of tip):	Cuspidate
10	Terminal leaflet (shape of base):	Obtuse
	Terminal leaflet (margin waviness):	Weak to medium
	Primary leaflets (average pairs):	3
	Primary leaflets (shape of tip):	Acuminate
	Primary leaflets (shape):	Medium ovate
15	Primary leaflets (shape of base):	Lobed
	<b>5. Inflorescence Characteristics:</b>	
	Corolla (shape):	Pentagonal
	Corolla (inner surface color):	White/155D RHS
	Calyx (anthocyanin coloration):	Absent
20	Anthers (shape):	Narrow cone
	Stigma (shape):	Capitate
	Stigma (color):	137A RHS
	<b>6. Tuber Characteristics:</b>	
	Skin (predominant color):	Tan
25	Skin (texture):	Smooth
	Tuber (shape):	Oval
	Tuber (thickness):	Slightly flattened
	Tuber (length):	80mm (average)
	Tuber (width):	73mm (average)



	Tuber (thickness):	52mm (average)
	Tuber eyes (depth):	Intermediate
	Tuber (primary flesh color):	160D RHS
	Tuber (prominence of eyebrows):	Slight prominence
5	Tuber (number per plant):	Medium (8-15)
7.	Reaction to Diseases:	
	Bacterial ring rot foliar reaction	Susceptible
	Bacterial ring rot tuber reaction	Susceptible
	Late blight <i>Phytophthora infestans</i>	Moderately resistant
10	Early blight	Resistant
	Leaf roll (PLRV)	Not tested
	Virus X	Not tested
	Virus Y	Highly susceptible
	8. Reaction to Pests:	
15	Golden nematode <i>Globodera rostochiensis</i>	Susceptible

Persons of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that when the term potato plant is used in the context of the present invention, this also includes derivative varieties that retain the essential distinguishing characteristics of FL1879, such as a Single Gene Converted plant of that variety or a transgenic derivative having one or more value-added genes incorporated therein (such as herbicide or pest resistance. Backcrossing methods can be used with the present invention to improve or introduce a characteristic into the variety. The term backcrossing as used herein refers to the repeated crossing of a hybrid progeny back to the recurrent parents. The parental potato plant which contributes the gene for the desired characteristic is termed the nonrecurrent or donor parent. This terminology refers to the fact that the nonrecurrent parent is used one time in the backcross protocol and therefore does not recur. The parental potato plant to which the gene or genes from the nonrecurrent parent are transferred is

known as the recurrent parent as it is used for several rounds in the backcrossing protocol. In a typical backcross protocol, the original variety of interest (recurrent parent) is crossed to a second variety (nonrecurrent parent) that carries the single gene of interest to be transferred. The resulting progeny from this cross are then crossed again to the recurrent parent and the process is repeated until a potato plant is obtained wherein essentially all of the desired morphological and physiological characteristics of the recurrent parent are recovered in the converted plant, in addition to the single gene transferred from the nonrecurrent parent.

- 10 The selection of a suitable recurrent parent is an important step for a successful backcrossing procedure. The goal of a backcross protocol is to alter or substitute a single trait or characteristic in the original variety. To accomplish this, a single gene of the recurrent variety is modified, substituted or supplemented with the desired gene from the nonrecurrent parent, while
- 15 retaining essentially all of the rest of the desired genes, and therefore the desired physiological and morphological constitution of the original variety. The choice of the particular nonrecurrent parent will depend on the purpose of the backcross. One of the major purposes is to add some commercially desirable, agronomically important trait to the plant. The exact backcrossing protocol will
- 20 depend on the characteristic or trait being altered or added to determine an appropriate testing protocol. Although backcrossing methods are simplified when the characteristic being transferred is a dominant allele, a recessive allele may also be transferred. In this instance, it may be necessary to introduce a test of the progeny to determine if the desired characteristic has been successfully
- 25 transferred.

Likewise, transgenes can be introduced into the plant using any of a variety of established recombinant methods well-known to persons skilled in the art.

Many single gene traits have been identified that are not regularly selected for in the development of a new variety but that can be improved by

backcrossing and genetic engineering techniques. Single gene traits may or may not be transgenic, examples of these traits include but are not limited to: herbicide resistance; resistance to bacterial, fungal or viral disease; insect resistance; uniformity or increase in concentration of starch and other carbohydrates; enhanced nutritional quality; decrease in tendency of tuber to bruise; and decrease in the rate of starch conversion to sugars. These genes are generally inherited through the nucleus. Several of these single gene traits are described in U.S. Patent No. 5,500,365, U.S. Patent No. 5,387,756, U.S. Patent No. 5,789,657, U.S. Patent No. 5,503,999, U.S. Patent No. 5,589,612, U.S. Patent No. 5,510,253, U.S. Patent No. 5,304,730, U.S. Patent No. 5,382,429, U.S. Patent N. 5,503,999, U.S. Patent No. 5,648,249, U.S. Patent No. 5,312,912, U.S. Patent No. 5,498,533, U.S. Patent No. 5,276,268, U.S. Patent No. 4,900,676, U.S. Patent No. 5,633,434 and U.S. Patent No. 4,970,168, the disclosures of which are specifically hereby incorporated by reference.

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Hereinabove has been set out a new variety of potato, *Solanum tuberosum*, designated as FL1879, including its physical characteristics and qualities by way of illustration and example for purposes of clarity and understanding. It will be obvious that variations are possible within the scope of this invention, as limited only by the scope of the appended claims.

REFERENCES

Douches, D.S. and K. Ludlam (1991). "Electrophoretic Characterization of North American Potato Cultivars", *Am. Potato J.* **68**:767-780.

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